DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 202 181 EA 013 662

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TITLE Public Education and the Reagan Administration.
INSTITUTION National Federation of Urban-Suburban School Districts, Charlottesville, Va.
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 16p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Civil Rights; *Educational Policy; Educational Vouchers; Elementary Secondary Education; *Federal Aid; *Federal Regulation; *Federal State Relationship; Retrenchment; School District Autonomy; States Powers; Tax Credits; Tuition; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS Block Grants; *Conservatism; Department of Education; Education for All Handicapped Children Act; *Reagan Administration

ABSTRACT

To inform educators of the changes in federal educational policy taking place under the Reagan administration, this paper includes comments on education made by participants in a legislative conference held in Washington, D.C. during February 1981. An introductory chapter by the editors summarizes the policy changes that can be expected to take place, as expressed at the conference and in the Heritage Foundation report titled "Mandate for Leadership: Policy Management in a Conservative Administration." The topics covered include budget cuts, deregulation, block grants, civil rights, local and state autonomy, tuition tax credits, vocational education, education for the handicapped, and the status of the Department of Education. (Author/WD)

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PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

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EA 013 662

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Cover Photograph: Wilburn Adams, Associate Superintendent, DeKalb County, Georgia

Typing: Sandra Turner, Secretary, NFUSSD

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

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Published by The National Federation of Urban-Suburban
School Districts
School of Education, University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia
1981

PREFACE

The election of Ronald Reagan to the presidency of the United States and the shift in power in the Congress from liberal to conservative will have a profound and significant impact upon public education in this country. Although the federal government funds less than 10% of the total education budget in this country, the legislation enacted during the Reagan administration could change the relationship of the federal government to public education.

The basic ideas concerning education advocated by conservatives in Washington come from a report titled Mandate for Leadership: Policy Management in a Conservative Administration. This report was generated by the Heritage Foundation, a conservative "think-tank" in Washington. The report covers the entire spectrum of the federal government with one section concerning education. The section concerning education was edited by Ronald F. Docksai, but many individuals contributed to its development. Among those who contributed were Mr. Charles W. Radcliffe, Minority Counsel and Staff Director, House Committee on Education and Labor, and Mr. Lawrence A. Uzzell, Senior Research Specialist, Research and Oversite Unit of the House Committee on Education and Labor.

The National Federation of Urban-Suburban School Districts, composed of twenty-four large public school districts, is concerned about the role that the federal government will play in public education during the next four years. In an effort to be more informed, the Federation conducted a Legislative Conference in Washington during February, 1981. Participants at the Conference were addressed by Mr. Charles Radcliffe and Mr. Lawrence Uzzell, who, as noted previously, contributed to the development of the Heritage Report. In addition, participants were addressed by The Honorable William F. Goodling (R-Pa.), Ranking Minority member of the Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education Subcommittee of the House Education and Labor Committee, and Mr. John F. Jennings, Majority Counsel and Staff Director for the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education of the House Committee on Education and Labor.

The comments of these four men were edited and serve as the basis of this publication. An introductory chapter was written by the editors. The comments contained herein do not necessarily reflect the position of the National Federation of Urban-Suburban School Districts. The purpose of the publication is to make educators aware of national educational issues. When educators are informed of the status of federal education policy, they will be able to make a significant impact on federal legislation.

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CHAPTER 1

CONSERVATIVE POLICY AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

Cecil F. Carter, Roger E. Jones, Frank E. Barham

Federal education policy may be undergoing a radical change. The extensive federal role in educational decision-making and federal influence in education may be replaced by a federal posture which supports more autonomous decision-making at the state and local levels. The involvement of the federal government in numerous programs begun during the Johnson administration and which flourished during the ensuing years, may be about to end. The Reagan administration has proposed a series of measures designed to reduce government spending, hence reducing the role of government in the everyday affairs of the American public. These measures will affect all areas of governmental activity, including education. With the Republican Party currently in control of the Senate and a number of conservative Democrats in both Houses of Congress supporting the ideas espoused by the President, it appears that many of the measures proposed have the potential to be realized.

At the foundation of the administration's proposal lies the economic philosophy of Milton Friedman. The basis of Friedman's philosophy is that a free market system, operated through voluntary cooperation, provides citizens with the greatest opportunity for equality and liberty. Advocates of this philosophy suggest that government interference in the everyday affairs of citizens should be kept to a minimum and that most services that are needed by the populace can be provided most efficiently by private enterprise. Friedman, and others, argue that the quality of public education, as evidenced by declining scores, has reached an unacceptable level. Part of the reason for the decline in public education is the excessive interference in educational matters by the federal government. Those who concur with Friedman are quick to point out the increased proliferation of paperwork, the ever growing educational bureaucracy, and the rising federal budget accompanied by declining test scores as indicators of the failure of public schools to deliver the services expected by the citizenry. The solution which is suggested by proponents of the free enterprise philosophy is to reduce federal involvement in educational decision-making and to return that responsibility to the states and localities. The responsibility for providing educational services would be delegated to the private sector. Such an action would increase the efficiency of the educational system because parents would control the education of their children and only those schools which provide satisfactory services would survive. The financial support for such a system would be through a system of vouchers, issued to each parent, to be used at the school of the parents' choice.

While the Reagan administration has not gone so far as to delegate full responsibility for education to the private sector, its proposals do reflect this economic philosophy and lean heavily in this direction. The Heritage Foundation issued a report entitled Mandate for Leadership: Policy Management in a Conservative Administration which serves to advise the President on the direction economic policy should take. This report is a mirror image of the Friedman school of thought and is a direct influence on the Reagan administration's proposals.

The authors of the Heritage report claimed that these proposals are designed to help revitalize the economy, strengthen the national security, and halt the centralization of power in the federal government. Throughout the report, emphasis was placed on two primary objectives: shifting educational decision-making back to the states and localities and elimination of burdens caused by excessive federal government regulations. With respect to the federal role in education, the authors of the report listed three acceptable areas of federal involvement: information gathering and dissimination, consultation and technical assistance, and research and development.

The Department of Education was discussed in the Heritage report. The following statement summarized the position of the authors concerning the Department:

> . . . the new Cabinet level Department of Education has in its maiden period made education policy more amorphous as a collection of programs to be implemented; less accessible to parents, community, and state leaders designing and deserving a direct role in education policy; and more bureaucratized, allowing an ever decreasing level of discretionary authority to state and local education

authorities. (p. 170)

The authors recommended that in principle the status of the Department of Education should be reduced to that of an agency. Of even greater importance, however, was the need to overhaul current federal education policy.

The authors of the Heritage Foundation report accused the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) within the Department of Education of destroying good federal-state relations in educational policy. They stated the following:

> The Offices of Civil Rights and Bilingual Education have undermined the principle of reserving control over educational policy-making and operations to states, localities, and public and private institutions. The goal towards which they appear to be striving is federal control over the curriculum, administration, and personnel of our educational institutions.
> . . . the role of OCR in "enforcement" of Title VI -- and possibly other areas as well -- needs to be narrowed so as to allow state and local education officials to develop programs which will take into consideration the unique situations of particular schools and school districts. (p. 187).

It was suggested that the ideal course of action would be to erase everything that Congress has done within the past two years and reestablish federal education policy to reserve authority to the states and localities and to increase their discretionary funding power.

Several "deficiencies" in present federal education policies were identified. They were as follows:

1. Detailed and precriptive categorical aid programs "result in interference in the operation of state and local school systems and costly and time-consuming administrative burdens which are counter-productive."

2. A host of grant programs have narrow categorical purposes which distort state and local institution programs. Local school programs often must be changed or reshaped to qualify for federal funds.

3. Formula grant programs are chopped into narrow categories of assistance. This means that federal funds are available for specified purposes only and that the amount of available funds is determined by formula. The actual program needs of local school districts vary from state to state and from year to year and may bear no relationship to the categorical program.

4. Additional discretionary grant programs greatly increase "federal 'clout', since recipients must compete for the funds solely on terms laid down by Washington bureaucrats."

5. Although the federal government contributes only 7 percent of educational funding," all of the above make it possible for the federal government to influence to an enormous extent the policy and practice of public education." (p. 172)

Several legislative and administrative options in federal education policy were recommended by the authors to correct these deficiencies. The purpose of these options would be to transfer decision-making authority for education programs away from the federal government. Several of the legislative options concerned consolidation of Title I programs. The following options were presented:

> 1. Consolidate everything outside Title I, except for the three best entrenched programs: vocational education, handicapped education, and "impact" aid for school districts with large proportions of families who live or work on federal property.
>
> 2. Consolidate everything outside of Title I, including the vocational, handicapped, and impact-aid programs.
>
> 3. Consolidate Title I together with non-Title I programs other than vocational, handicapped, and impact aid.
>
> 4. Consolidate Title I together with all non-Title I programs. (p. 176).

In defense of these proposals, it was argued that:

> Any of the options would give state and local educators greater discretion

to pursue their own priorities; would reverse the 15-year trend toward greater complexity and convolutedness in ESEA programs; and would make possible substantial cuts in the 1400 pages of federal education regulations, in the 10 million state and local man-hours now consumed by federal education paperwork, and in the payroll of the new Department of Education which totals more than 5000 full time permanent employees . . . (p. 176).

A fifth option recommended that Title I retain its present character and that aid in the form of vouchers go to the parents of disadvantaged children. These vouchers could be used in either public or private schools. According to the authors, such a system would aid inner city blacks and Hispanics. It would also sound the "death knell for statist education." (p. 177).

An administrative option involved enforcement of the General Educational Provisions Act, Section 417. "This law requires the Department of Education to state -- in measurable, quantitative terms -- the specific goals and objectives of each of its programs and to report annually to Congress on each program's progress (and lack thereof) toward these goals." (p. 177). With respect to this, the authors stated:

> A Secretary of Education should make it clear that he does have a clear objective against which all education programs will be evaluated: their contributions to the basic academic skills of reading, writing, and calculation, as measured by standardized norm-referenced tests. . . . programs whose officials fail to cooperate with the evaluation process will be penalized when the time comes to set the proposals for future budgets. The burden of proof will be on those who contend that a program makes a positive and significant difference; absent such proof, the program would not merely be "level funded", but cut. (p. 178).

Several programs within the Office of School Improvement (OSI) were discussed in the report. It was decided that the best means of exercising control over these programs was through the budgetary process. It was recommended that the Basic Skills Division of OSI continue to receive its current level of support and that concerted efforts be made toward development and improvement of the basic skills. Other programs within OSI did not enjoy such favorable recommendations. The Womens Educational Equity Program (WEEAP) was described as having more concern with feminist politics than with quality education. According to the authors, "WEEAP is a top priority item for the feminist network and is an important resource for the practice of feminist policies and politics." (p. 180). It was recommended that the WEEAP programs be closely scrutinized and its budget drastically cut. The Teacher Centers program received similar treatment from the authors. This program was described as a service to special interest groups and as "taxpayer financed union halls;" therefore, financial support for Teacher Centers should be cut. Other programs targeted for cuts were Consumer Education, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Education, Arts in Education, Metric Education, Ethnic Heritage Studies, and Law-Related Education.

The authors presented a scathing attack on the effects of the grant process on course content. They stated the following:

> During the past 15 years, there has been a concerted nationwide effort by professional educationists to turn elementary and secondary school classrooms into vehicles for liberal-left social and political change in the United States. (p. 187).

Several federally funded programs were cited to support the contention that public schools are serving as vehicles for liberal-left activism. Values Clarification programs, according to the report, "deny to parents the right to be their children's authorities and guides in all matters . . . ." (p. 189). Projects to Advance Creativity in Education (PACE) was attacked as a program whose, " . . . intent is psychosocial change and the employment by teachers of clinical psychological techniques designed to inculcate or alter students moral, social, religious, and political attitudes and behavior." (p. 189). Several publications of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) were presented as exemplary of government programs used to disseminate the liberal-left philosophy. The Wingspread Report on New Dimensions in Teaching of the Social Studies, issued by the National Association of Independent Schools, was also cited as a tool of liberal-left education activitists to implement social planning and social change, and to build a new world social and political order. Man: A Course of Study (MACOS) and the Human Sciences Program (HSP) were also cited as government funded vehicles for liberal-

left activism.

The following short term and long term administrative options were presented as solutions to dissatisfactions relative to federal grants and course content:

Short Term

1. Fill administrative appointments with persons who are committed to basic skills, not the humanistic or psychosocial approaches.

2. Reassign persons who are not committed to basic skills to positions of less influence with respect to decision-making in the bureaucracy.

3. End federal support of programs not aimed at development and improvement of basic academic skills.

4. Establish a means of program evaluation so that recipients of federal services can determine the quality and usefulness of each service.

Long Term

1. Affirm the rights of school boards, parents, and students regarding federally administered or supported programs.

2. Establish standards that will prevent the invasion of student/family privacy.

3. Require that a needs assessment be conducted to establish the need for the implementation of any federally funded program.

4. Establish procedures to insure accuracy and public acceptance of federally aided projects and programs.

5. Establish procedures for the protection of human subjects from physical, psychological, or sociological harm.

6. Terminate federal support for the development and marketing of curriculum materials. This should be left to the private sector commercial firms.

A recurring theme in the Heritage Foundation report was the reduction of federal influence in educational decision-making and the restoration of decision-making authority to states and local school districts. According to the report this can be achieved through modification of present federal policies with respect to education. In addition to budget cuts, one can expect proposals to be presented during the 97th session of Congress that will alter the mechanisms through which federal funds are allocated to states and localities. Such proposals will be hotly debated, especially during the first year of the Reagan administration. It remains to be seen if the proper balance between what is educationally sound and the political, economic, and social realties of the 1980s can be attained. The survival of public education may depend upon it.

CHAPTER 2

FEDERAL EDUCATION POLICY

Charles Radcliffe, Esq.

During the ninety-seventh session of Congress, educators will be asked to lobby against a set of education proposals that have been submitted by the Reagan administration. When considering these proposals, or when lobbying, it is important to remember that the authorization of federal funds is different from the appropriation of federal funds. The House Education and Labor Committee and the corresponding Senate committee are authorization committees. These committees set the terms by which federal money is made available to the schools. The appropriation process is completely separate. Authorization may be given for programs for which no funds are appropriated. An authorization committee simply sets the ceiling for funding, and appropriations generally fall below what is authorized. Support for education programs must be generated in both authorization and appropriation committees. Authorization without appropriation may not produce the desired outcome.

There has been an effort by numerous groups to influence legislation concerning the method in which education funds are made available to public schools. It has been suggested that the proposal to reform the way in which education funds are made available to the schools is irretrievably tied to the proposal to cut education funding. This is not true. The way that federal funding gets to the public schools and the conditions under which these funds are made available to the schools can be changed without respect to the level of federal funding.

Educators should resist the proposition that they must oppose budget cuts. The United States is in a severe economic crisis which is linked to a runaway federal budget. The federal budget is not uncontrollable, but it is out of control. The success of our schools hinges on the well being of our economic system. Cuts in federal funding should be carefully examined, but we must get federal spending and inflation under control. To accomplish this purpose, it may be necessary to cut federal spending in education.

Federal education policy must be redirected to provide assistance to local school districts without unnecessary interference by the federal government. Unnecessary interference and undue interference, however, are not the same. There are some areas where federal interference is necessary in the schools. The area of civil rights is an example. The federal government has the responsibility to interfere if any constitutional violations are suspected. There must be an avenue where these violations can be redressed, and the federal government is that avenue. Therefore, some federal interference is necessary. The key is to work to eliminate federal interference that is unnecessary.

There are about sixty federal programs in the elementary and secondary schools with over 1400 pages of regulations governing implementation of these programs. This is a classic example of overregulation. Burdensome paperwork is causing enormous problems in the schools and is the number one complaint of school principals. Much of the blame for this paperwork should go to the Congress and not to the bureaucrats in Washington. The laws are grossly overwritten. The laws are so prescriptive that details are spelled out as if what will work in one school district will work in all school districts. This type of prevailing attitude in Congress is disastrous for education. Congress does not know how best to run the schools.

The purpose of specific legislation may be good, but the regulations often get in the way of doing the job that the legislation intended. Congress can make legislation more effective by providing school districts with assistance that preserves both fiscal and program accountability but which does not become a burden to local districts. Education in this country can profit by taking educational decision making from the federal level and returning it to the states and localities.

The types of grants that are given by the federal government can help tilt decision making back to the states and localities. Discretionary grants should be cut back. School districts should not have to change their educational programs in order to get federal grants. It would be advantageous to give a block of money to the states with a list of acceptable programs for which the money could be spent. The states could spend the money in those areas that will best meet the needs of the students in their state.

The federal government must continue to provide localities with funds for special populations with special needs. This type of funding should go to the local level. Additional funds for support services could go to the states. It would be up to the states to decide how to administer these funds.

A problem area which must be eliminated is the gross overreaching of the federal bureaucracy for political purposes under the egis of civil rights. Civil rights has been used, in some instances, to accomplish political ends at the expense of the public schools. A classic example is Title IX. Title IX has injected the federal government into local schools more profoundly than anything the federal government has done. The operative language of Title IX bans sex discrimination in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Problems have arisen from an interpretation of Title IX. The interpretation bans sex discrimination in education in any school, or school system, receiving federal financial assistance. The difference between this interpretation and the actual wording of the law is startling. By the law, the federal government is limited to an examination of specific federal programs. By the interpretation, the law mandates federal policy in all areas of school operations. Athletics and physical education programs do not receive federal assistance. Under the actual wording of Title IX, they are not affected. It is the improper interpretation of Title IX that has caused the problem.

Hopefully, the Reagan administration will withdraw the regulations for Title IX and rewrite them on the basis of the law as it is written. If this is not done, the Supreme Court will determine the issue. The purpose of the Executive branch of government is to carry out the law as written not to write their own laws. The federal government should not do anything it does not have the legal authority to do.

P. L. 94-142 is grossly overprescriptive and overregulated; however, it will be difficult to change 94-142. Some educators believe that 94-142 should be rewritten to make a distinction between educational and related services. School districts must be able to assure advocates of handicapped legislation that if the act is rewritten, it is not a step back in meeting the needs of handicapped children. If this cannot be done, it will not be politically possible to change the act. The needs of handicapped children must be met.

Federal education policy can be affected most by concentrating efforts at the local level. If school officials would take the time to meet with legislators to explain problems and concerns, it would be more beneficial than lobbying in Washington. Give legislators examples of how the laws or regulations have affected the school district. A personal visit with representatives is much better than a letter writing campaign. Stress that the intent of the legislation is good, but let legislators know how federal regulations affect the school district. When meeting with legislators, however, it is important to know what is written in the laws and regulations and to know what interpretations the courts have made.

To summarize, there are three areas of federal policy that must be addressed by the Reagan administration. Changes in these areas will have a significant impact on education in this country. First, the Reagan administration needs the help of educators to get the federal budget under control or the amount of dollars given to education will be irrelevant. Second, the focus of educational decision making must be shifted back to the states and local school districts. Third, legislation by regulation must be eliminated. If these changes are made, education in this country will have a much stronger foundation.

CHAPTER 3

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES BEFORE CONGRESS: REPUBLICAN PERSPECTIVE

The Honorable William F. Goodling (R-Pa.)

During the Reagan administration, there will be cuts in all areas of the federal budget. There is no doubt that some cuts will be made in educational programs. The decision that must be made is where to make the cuts so they will do the least damage to education. Educators must be given the opportunity to have significant input in this decision making process. Educators will have to fight during this administration to make sure they have input concerning where cuts should or could be made. Congress also will have to be convinced to remain true to the philosophy of the Reagan administration which is that cuts in funding must be accompanied by cuts in federal mandates.

It may not be wise during the 97th Congress to introduce any education legislation which will call for additional spending, for new spending, or for additional programs. Emphasis should be placed on existing programs. An existing program that will be a major issue is vocational education because a reauthorization bill will be introduced during this session of Congress. Input is needed from educators concerning vocational education.

Block grants will be a major issue during the Reagan administration. When considering block grants proprosals, we must be sure that these grants do not mean sending money to the states with the localities having little input as to its use. Local school districts should be making decisions about how block grant money should be spent to educate the children in their localities.

Tuition tax credits will be a controversial issue before Congress. The major concern of the tuition tax credit program is are we sentencing the poor to always be poor? Before deciding the fate of tuition tax credits, special consideration must be given to the effect that the program will have on the poor.

The Department of Education probably will be downgraded from its present cabinet position during the Reagan administration. If this is done, education should remain an independent agency separate from health and welfare.

Impact aid is a controversial issue facing Congress. If impact aid is eliminated, it should be phased out so that localities have time to absorb the loss of revenue. There is an injustice built into Part 2 of the impact aid legislation because of the inequalities it creates in school districts. As a result, impact aid legislation must be reviewed carefully.

Even though defeated last session, a youth employment bill is vitally needed. The problem with youth unemployment is that CETA, Vocational Education, and local school districts do not work together to solve or minimize youth unemployment. Educators have wasted alot of money on remedial programs in Junior-Senior High Schools because students have no goal at the end of school or have no hope of getting a job. There also is a vital need to work with school dropouts who are unemployed.

These issues facing Congress are vital to the future of public education. The way they are resolved by the 97th Congress and the Reagan administration will have a profound effect on public education.

CHAPTER 4

BLOCK GRANTS, DEREGULATION, AND TUITION TAX CREDITS

Lawrence Uzzell

One of the most pressing problems facing education during the Reagan administration is funding cuts. This means less federal money for education. The issues affecting the amount of money which will be available for education are those that normally are not considered educational in nature. Across the board tax cuts, creation of tight money, and control of inflation will do more for the public schools than adding another 10% to the present federal education budget. A federal tax cut would create less of a burden on local taxpayers. As a result, local taxpayers could sustain the local schools without undue hardship. Creating tight money and controlling inflation will mean that more goods and services can be purchased with the same amount of money because the dollar will be worth more.

The size of the federal education budget, however, is less important than the shape of the budget. The way the money is spent is more important than the amount. Block grants will have a significant effect upon the shape of the federal education budget. Presently, there are more than 150 categorical programs being operated by the Department of Education. This convoluted structure means that decisions that should be made at the local level are being made at the federal level. Block grants are a means of moving that decision making back to the localities; however, there is one key issue which must be clarified before any block grant legislation is enacted. The issue is who will be dominant in deciding how to use block grant money. Will it be the state education agency or the local school board? It is important to structure block grant legislation in such a way that will avoid further inflating state educaion bureaucracies. If this is not done, the red tape that was created in Washington simply will be shifted to state education agencies.

The primary purpose of block grants is not to create administrative efficiency. The purpose is to restore decision-making authority to those who are closest to the teachers and the children. Substituting state power for federal power does not create a solution.

Consolidation of federal programs will not eliminate federal regulations. Block grants must be accompanied by deregulation of the public schools. Unless microscopic detailed regulations are removed from Title IX, bilingual education, and sex discrimination, the block grant proposal will fall short of its full potential. If these federal regulations remain, the federal government will continue to be the decision making body. Detailed regulations mandate policy and programs from the federal government. Federal regulations must be modified if decision-making is to be returned to the localities.

Tuition tax credits will be a major issue during the Reagan administration. Tuition tax credits are not a threat to the survival of the public schools. They will increase competition between public and private schools just as there presently is competition between public and private colleges and universities. Tuition tax credits are simply a matter of equity.

Test scores continue to decline among public school students. As a result, many parents have become disenchanted with the schools. Tuition tax credits will provide an alternative for parents. Parents who could not afford to send their children to private schools in the past will be able to do so with tuition tax credits. This will lead to competition, and competition leads to better quality schools, both public and private.

Tuition tax credits do not violate the principle of the separation of church and state. Because it is a tax credit, no money is collected by the federal government. Therefore, no money is paid by the federal government to church affiliated private schools. The constitutional issues arise only if the federal government collects the money and then provides assistance to church supported private schools. The tuition tax credit principle is the same principle used to allow taxpayers to deduct the amount of tithes paid to the church on their federal income tax form.

Block grants, deregulation, and tuition tax credits are not a panacea. They will not miraculously cure the ills of American education. They will enable decisions to be made where they should be made and create competition which should enhance the quality of education in this country.

CHAPTER 5

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES BEFORE CONGRESS: DEMOCRATIC PERSPECTIVE

John F. Jennings, Esq.

President Reagan controls the government today. He clearly controls the executive branch. He has a clear majority in the Senate, and he has a majority on the House floor. Even though the Democrats control the House nominally, the Republicans have the majority on the floor because twenty-five to thirty Democrats will cross over and vote with the Republicans on almost every economic issue this year. What President Reagan proposes will be pretty much what is enacted this year.

There are six issues of major importance which are being dictated by the Reagan administration. The first issue is tuition tax credits. The proposed bill will cost from $2½ - $3 billion, and there is a majority in the House to pass that bill if the bill is voted out of the House Ways and Means Committee. There probably is a majority that supports the bill in the Senate. The House adopted tuition tax credit legislation during 1978, but it was rejected by the Senate. With the election of conservative Republicans, there probably is a majority now in the Senate to pass the legislation.

There are problems with tuition tax credits. There are constitutional problems, and other problems.

The second major issue is a battle over dollars. The Reagan administration supports a twenty-five percent slash in federal funding of education.

If the Reagan administration is able to control legislation in these two areas, there will be a significant departure in the federal government's attitude toward education. The next step in this process, according to the Heritage Foundation, is to go to educational vouchers for federal aid to education. If vouchers are implemented, the public schools will have no guarantee of federal money. The money would be available to the parents of each child to use at whatever school they wished.

Dollars, tuition tax credits, and vouchers are tied together. If the Reagan administration is successful, the role of the public school in our educational scheme will be diluted. Whether this is good or bad depends upon one's point of view, but it is a significant departure from the commonly accepted way of thinking in this country about public education and the role of private schools in our educational programs.

The third issue is consolidation. It appears that there will be a proposal to consolidate the current federal education programs into block grants. There is considerable support for this in the Congress because legislators have heard so many complaints at the local level that there are too many complexities and too many paperwork requirements in federal programs. As a result, legislators are looking to block grants as a means to eliminate some of this complexity.

"Block grant" actually is a catch word. It somehow means simplifying procedures and somehow turning control of education back to the state and local governments. There are alot of difficult questions behind the facade of that catch word. Will the money always be there? Whenever block grants have been created by Congress in other areas, there generally has been a diminution of federal support in those programs. Who makes the decision about how the money is spent? Even if authority is returned to state and local governments, the decision still must be made about who makes the decisions about how the money is spent. Is it the Governor, the Chief State School Officer, or the state legislature? Do local school board members want state people deciding how much money is available to the localities?

The House Education and Labor Committee generally votes out bills indicating that the state departments of education decide how the money is to be spent. If this is done, you actually have a block grant to the chief state school officer to decide how the money is to be spent. Does the state school officer have any restrictions placed on him concerning how the money is to be spent?

If the money is sent directly to the local level, there will be problems. The local superintendent and local school board will have a block of money to be spent on educational programs. This means that local school officials will be inundated with pressures from interest groups concerning how that money is to be spent on the local level.

There are fifty-seven federal education programs involving about $5 billion in federal aid. This $5 billion could be consolidated into block grants. However, if Title I funds ($3.5 billion) and aid to the handicapped ($1 billion) retain separate funding as some have proposed, ninety-five percent of federal funding will be tied to these programs. In effect, there would be a block grant for five percent of the money. Is this a block grant? Or is it really a label put on something that is nothing more than a reshuffling of what is there and having it come back the same way?

Do not allow legislators to say that block grants will allow more flexibility without having to answer the above questions. School districts could wind up with the same amount of paperwork as before.

Vocational education legislation is up for renewal during the 97th Congress and is the fourth major issue. This will be the major bill for education in the next couple of years. When this bill goes to the Senate, there may be many extraneous amendments attached. In the House, the Vocational Education bill, because of House rules, will be a narrow, germane bill. The Senate does not follow the same rules as the House so the simple Vocational Education bill may become a very complex bill in the Senate.

The fifth issue is education for the handicapped. The major part of this act is permanent and does not expire, but there are categoreis of programs that do expire during 1982. There will be a discussion of the Education for the Handicapped Act in Congress.

The final educational issue before Congress is the status of the Department of Education. This issue is symbolic. It was symbolic for Carter, and it is symbolic for Reagan. The key point is that a cabinet level Secretary has direct access to the President in appealing budget cutbacks. If education is lowered from department status, it loses that appeal.

At present, the Reagan administration has the support it needs to enact major changes in the structure of federal support for public education. Educators must be aware of the rhetoric currently being used in discussions of these changes. Legislators and administrators must be pressed for answers to critical questions concerning proposed changes.